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Thank you for reading The Conaway Chronicle, a weekly review of my activities in Congress. This newsletter is to let you know what’s going on in Washington and what important issues are being debated in Congress.

Congress returns this week following the Thanksgiving holiday and district work period. At the beginning of the recess, I had the privilege of traveling to Colombia with U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez to promote the pending Free Trade Agreement with Colombia. The progress toward the freedom and security of its people that Colombia has made under President Alvaro Uribe is nothing short of astounding. The most remarkable recovery has occurred in the town of Medellin. Medellin was long known as the murder capital of the world. There were more than 300 murders per 100,000 people in 1991, yet last year there were fewer murders in Medellin than in Baltimore or Washington, D.C. (less than 30 per 100,000). This is primarily due to the education and work programs supported by the Colombian government. The Colombian people are also continuing to work to greatly reduce the transport of drugs into the United States and other nations. The trip gave me a great perspective on how blessed we are in this country and I will strongly support the Colombian Free Trade Agreement.



*Rep. Conaway with members of the U.S. Congressional delegation, Secretary Gutierrez, and members of the Colombian military*

Below are some additional items of interest:

**The Future of American Energy**

Energy is an issue that affects every single person in our country and there is no doubt that our energy crisis is real. The Democratic House leadership is expected to bring an omnibus energy bill to the House floor this week, but details are still murky and it is already receiving heavy criticism from the Senate. One feature of the agreement is a consensus on raising fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks and adding billions of gallons of ethanol and other alternative fuels by way of an increase to the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) mandate.

One possible facet of the energy bill is to inflict a nationwide Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requiring states to produce a certain amount of electricity from renewable sources. RPS places an unfair burden on states that lack the natural resources to meet a new renewable electricity standard. Consumers who live in these states will be forced to pay considerably higher electricity rates with no additional renewable electricity in return. Efforts such as this will not solve our energy problems and are not good policy. I will continue to work closely with my colleagues to form a real plan to provide our country with the energy security we need.

**Medicare Part D Open Enrollment Available until the End of the Year**

Last month marked the beginning of the open enrollment period for the Medicare Prescription

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Drug Benefit- also known as Medicare Part D- which extends until December 31, 2007. This open enrollment period provides senior citizens who are currently unsatisfied with their current health insurance coverage an opportunity to enroll in the program or alter their existing Medicare Part D plan to best fit their needs. I encourage all seniors in District 11 to evaluate their current plans and make the necessary changes to fit their health needs and save money on prescription drugs. Medicare Part D is a voluntary program that assists senior citizens and low-income individuals in paying their prescription drug costs. If you have questions about your Medicare coverage, call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).



### **2007 Farm Bill**

Before the Thanksgiving recess, I joined two of my West Texas colleagues, Congressmen Mac Thornberry (TX-13) and Randy Neugebauer (TX-19), to introduce legislation that would extend the 2002 Farm Bill for an additional year. Portions of the 2002 Farm Bill began to expire on September 30, 2007, leaving agriculture producers without any guidelines to plan for next year's crop. I support a one-year extension to allow sufficient time for the Senate to pass a Farm Bill and for the House and Senate to work out differences between their bills. It will be difficult for the Senate to pass a Farm Bill within the proper amount of time needed to give America's producers ample notification to prepare for future business plans. I believe that investment in agriculture is wise Federal policy. I will continue to support legislation that provides the proper tools, resources and practices that have a proven track record of working not only for the American farmer and rancher but for the American taxpayer and consumer. Should this legislation move forward it should be noted that this is a simple one- year extension and our work in Congress is far from complete. I look forward to working, hopefully in a bipartisan manner, on the Farm Bill that I was proud to initially support that came from the House Committee on Agriculture in June.

### **Marvin 'Rex' Young Post Office**

Last Thursday, a Post Office naming ceremony was held in honor of U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Marvin 'Rex' Young in Odessa. In May of this year, I introduced and the U.S. House of Representatives voted unanimously to pass [H.R. 1425](#), which designates a facility of the United States Postal



Service in Odessa as the 'Staff Sergeant Marvin 'Rex' Young Post Office Building'. On August 21, 1968, while in battle in Vietnam, Staff Sgt. Young gave the ultimate sacrifice to save the lives of his friends and comrades and was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery and sacrifice. I am delighted that Rex's legacy will be honored and constantly remembered by his hometown. [Click here](#) to watch a segment of last week's ceremony in Odessa.

The Conaway Chronicle will be issued every Monday or Tuesday when Congress is in session. I hope that you will find it informative and will continue to stay informed with my recent legislative activities in Washington. In the meantime, if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for future issues of the Conaway Chronicle, please visit the website at [www.house.gov/conaway](http://www.house.gov/conaway) or don't hesitate to call me at (202) 225-3605. Check out my blog at [www.conawayblog.com](http://www.conawayblog.com)!

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